

LET'S EXPLORE

Washington's Crossing Of Delaware River Called Great Strategy

ONE electrifying stroke on Christmas Night, 1776, when Washington rallied his downcast troops to cross the Delaware and smash the Hessians at Trenton may well have changed the history of the world. In less than 24 hours, the American cause leaped from hopeless despair to flaming optimism.

Today's trip is planned to view at close range in a 30-mile trip up and down the Delaware River the spots intimately connected with that famed crossing of the Delaware so familiar to every schoolboy. It's possible of course that history leaves you cold. In that case there are still lots of other reasons for coming along.

There are, for example, two old canals—one on each side of the river to interest the technically-minded. Any one fascinated by 18th Century architecture finds enough to keep him happy. Picnickers enjoy extensive areas on both

sides of the river. Scenery lovers are satisfied by the beautiful country rising upward from the river. It adds up to this—Why stay home?

THE tour starts at Lambertville, reached by way of Routes 29 and 30 from Flemington or Route 202 from Morristown. Directions are this simple: Stay on Route 29 to a crossing of the Delaware at Washington Crossing or Yardley. In Pennsylvania stay on Route 32 to New Hope and back to Lambertville.

Just below Lambertville the Delaware dashes madly through rocky formations at Wells Falls, considered by raftsmen of long ago the most dreaded portion of the river. Here the Delaware falls 14 feet in little more than a half mile. Rising to a height of 400 feet on the left is Goat Hill, the westernmost part of the Sourland Mountains.

The Delaware and Raritan feeder canal between the road

and the river was once a link in a canal system linking Pennsylvania's coal fields with New York City. For a pleasant little side trip take one of the bridges over the canal into maple-shaded Titusville, virtually an island between the canal and the river.

McKonkey Ferry House, a

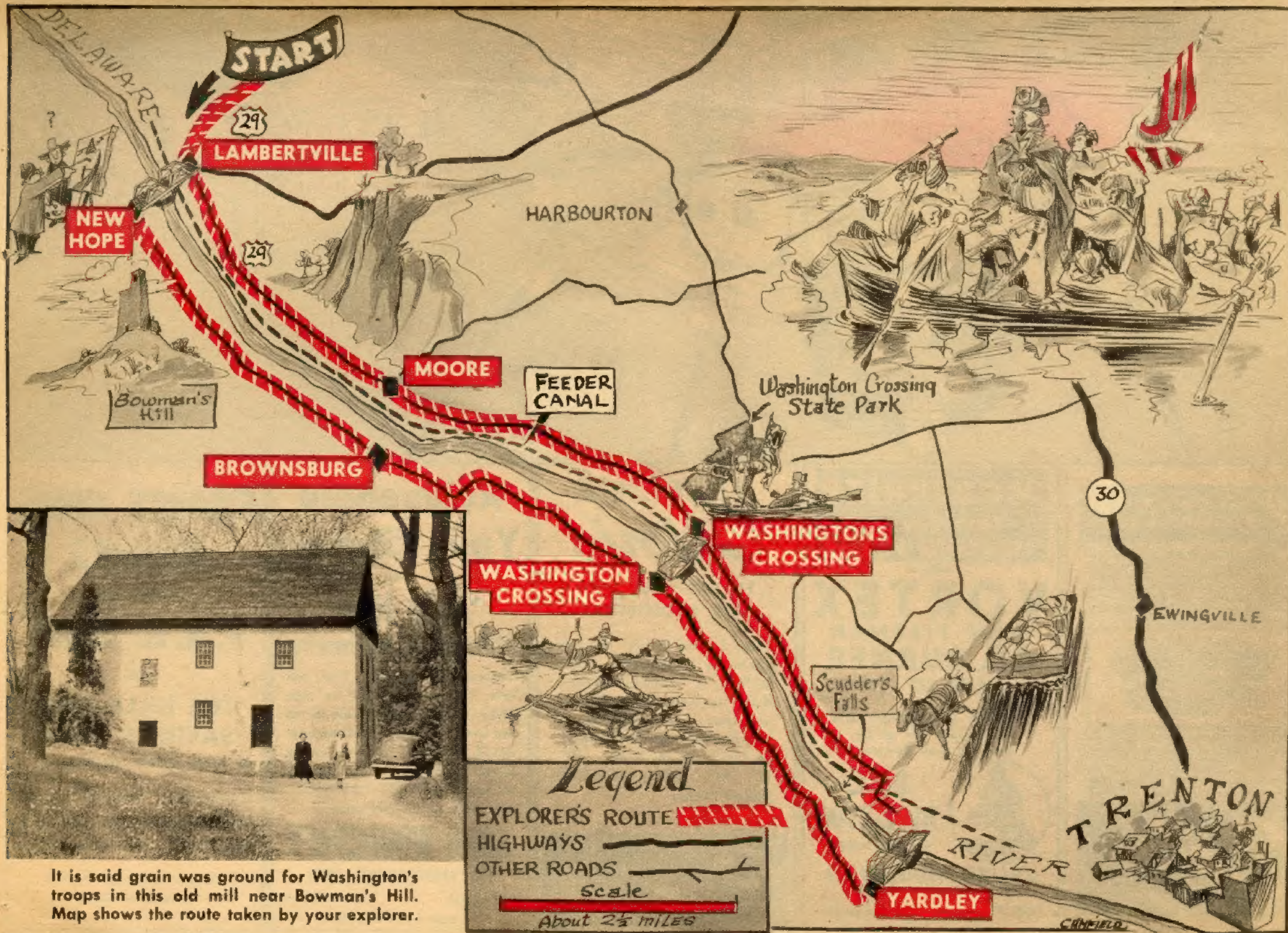
small white frame house behind a white fence, marks the entrance to the New Jersey portion of Washington Crossing Park. Inside an enthusiastic guide points out where Washington sat before a roaring fire to gain strength after the hazardous crossing. Her feeling is contagious—so let's retell the story briefly.

THE Continental cause seemed futile as Washington paused in Pennsylvania after the disastrous retreat across New Jersey by way of Hackensack and Newark. No more than 3,000 soldiers were left, most of them ready to go home. This army seemed scarcely able to defend itself,



BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

One of the few remaining old wooden bridges spanning the Lehigh Canal. Pennsylvania gradually is converting much of this area into a beautiful state park.



It is said grain was ground for Washington's troops in this old mill near Bowman's Hill. Map shows the route taken by your explorer.



Bridge across the Delaware River links New Jersey and Pennsylvania near where Washington crossed on Christmas Night, 1776, to win smashing Trenton victory.

yet Washington wisely decided to attack.

A blinding sleet storm swept down as the general led his army across the ice-choked river. The pause at McKonkey's was just long enough to organize the troops, then the army marched southward where ineptly-led Hessians were sleeping off a Christmas celebration in Trenton. History's statistics record the incredible fact that only four American men were injured in the 45-minute attack in contrast with 106 Hessians killed or wounded and 812 Germans who were made prisoners.

Immediately Washington took his victory-flushed troops back to Pennsylvania. A week later he returned to outfox Cornwallis by leaving blazing campfires while he withdrew his army from Trenton to Princeton. On January 3, 1777, he smashed the British in a quick battle at Princeton, then marched to Winter headquarters at Morristown.

Thus, within 10 days the Revolution turned from a

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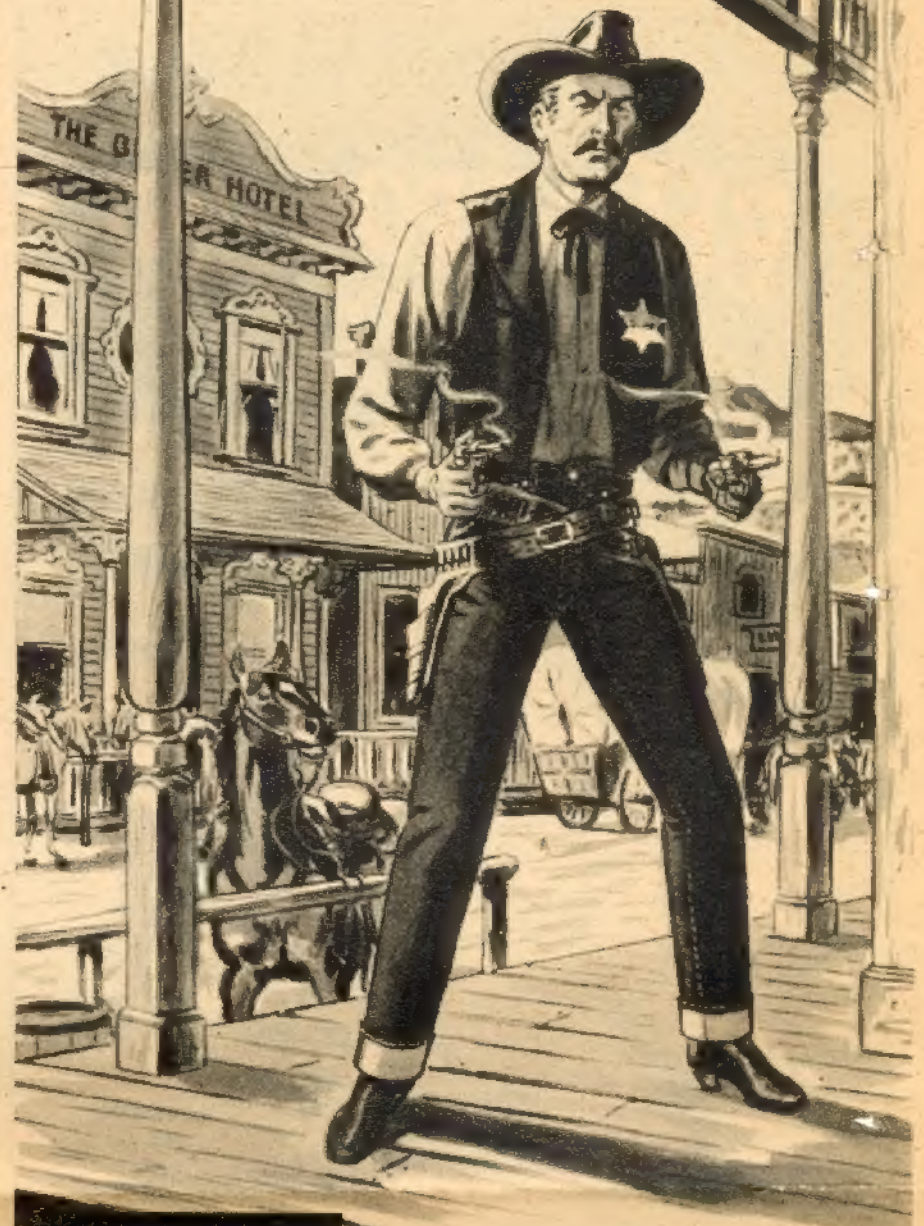
This 110-foot tower atop Bowman's Hill marks the spot where Colonial lookouts observed the enemy.



Slabs of granite contributed by each of 13 original states form the base for flagpole near graves of America's first "unknown soldiers" at Bowman's Hill.

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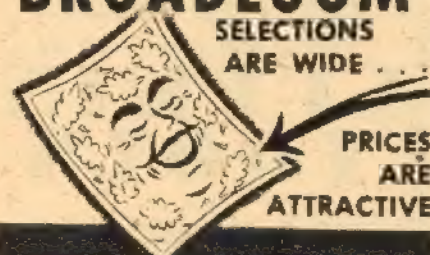
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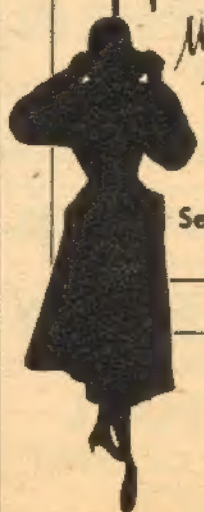
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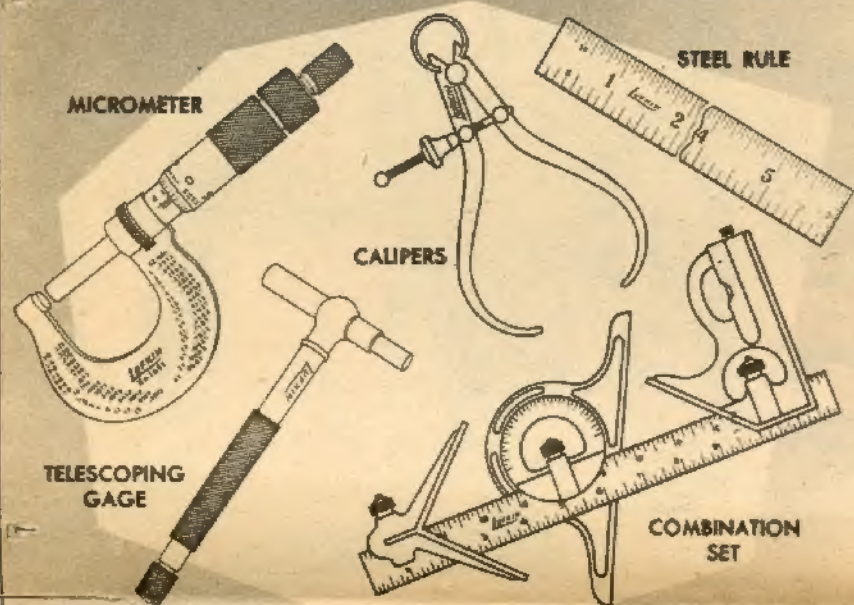
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Let's Explore . . .
Washington's Crossing

This old inn at Pennsylvania end of Delaware bridge at Washington's Crossing is one of few buildings which was standing in that vicinity in early 1700s.

(Cont'd from Preceding Page)
desperate situation to one of great potentiality. Frederick the Great called the attack on Trenton the most brilliant operation in all military history. Cornwallis was to write Washington after the Battle of Yorktown:

"* * * Fame will gather your brightest laurels from the banks of the Delaware rather than from those of the Chesapeake."

A BRIDGE carries to Pennsylvania at the park but a trip down to cross at Yardley is worthwhile. This is roughly the way followed by part of Washington's army headed South. As the road swings sharply right to cross the canal a dam in the river marks Scudder's Falls. The dam, built in 1831 to make a raceway to Trenton, took its name from Amos Scudder, one of the guides on the march to Trenton. Off to the left of Pennsylvania's Route 32 across the Delaware can be seen the banks of the old Lehigh Canal which some day will be a state park running from Easton to Bristol, Pa. Parts of it are being used now as a park, particularly the area near Bowman's Hill.

Washington Crossing (Pa.) has an authentic year-1800 look. Only the inn dates back

to the time of the actual crossing but every other structure was built within a few years of 1800 (with the exception of one "new" house built in 1890). Guides point out where Washington embarked and they also give directions to Bowman's Hill.

A one-way road leads up the hill named for Dr. Jonathan Bowman, who built a cabin on the slopes after sailing as ship's surgeon with Captain Kidd. Kidd had been commissioned to suppress piracy but instead joined the pirates, as did Dr. Bowman. The notorious Kidd was hanged in 1701 but Dr. Bowman escaped and made his way to Pennsylvania.

A 110-FOOT tower on the hill marks the spot where Washington's lookout was posted. A circular stairway inside leads to the top, where the countryside can be viewed for miles in every direction. The short-of-breath or the timid who eschew the circular stairway can still get marvelous views through two areas where trees have been cut down. Down from the tower the road leads past the Wildflower Preserve, where nearly 900 plants, shrubs, ferns and vines have been planted along 15 well-marked trails. The preserve directors hope even-

tually to include every plant native to Pennsylvania.

At the foot of the hill on River road is the old grist mill which is said to have ground flour for the Continental Army. A huge wooden over-shot mill wheel still turns the ancient machinery. Across the street is the stone Thompson-Neely House, open to the public for the first time this year. The central portion of the house was built in 1701, one wing was built in 1752 and the second wing was finished soon after. Brigadier Gen. Stirling of New Jersey fame was quartered here during the days preceding the crossing.

THE flagpole base and the burying ground for the nation's first "unknown soldiers" in Roosevelt Park near the river are interesting. Thirteen blocks of granite contributed by each of the original colonies form the flagpole base. American flags mark the graves of unknown Revolutionary War soldiers.

The way home is by way of handsome old New Hope and equally-handsome Lambertville, whose many brick buildings with their balconies, square white pillars and fancy ironwork are reminiscent of parts of Philadelphia or Baltimore.



Central portion of this old house near Bowman's Hill dates back to 1702. It was used by New Jersey's Brigadier Gen. Sterling as war-time headquarters.